

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1, 3, 5, 7 through 10, 12, 14, and 16 through 18 and add Claims 19 and 20 to read, as follows. Note that all the claims currently pending in this application, including those not presently amended, have been reproduced below for the Examiner's convenience.

1. (Currently Amended) A cleaning method for cleaning a developer container, comprising:

a blowing step of blowing air through an opening formed in said developer container at a first flow rate; and

a suction sucking step of sucking air through the opening from the developer container at a second flow rate, which is larger than the first flow rate, to suck toner from developer in the developer container to clean the developer container,

wherein said blowing step and said suction sucking step are carried out concurrently while supplying ambient air into the developer container carried out through an opening formed in the developer container, while ambient air is flowing into the developer container through an ambient air inlet.

2. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the ambient air inlet is disposed at a position opposite from the opening with respect to a longitudinal direction of the developer container.

3. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising an inserting step of inserting an air nozzle of the blowing device into the developer container through the opening.

4. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 3, wherein in said blowing step air is blown through a plurality of air blowing ports in directions perpendicular to a longitudinal direction of the air nozzle at different positions with respect to a circumferential direction of the air nozzle.

5. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 3, wherein in said inserting step, first and second air nozzles are inserted into the developer container through the opening, and in said blowing step air is blown through a plurality of air blowing ports of the first air nozzle in directions perpendicular to a longitudinal direction of the first air nozzle at different positions with respect to a circumferential direction of the first air nozzle, and air is blown through an air blowing port provided at a longitudinal end of the second air nozzle in a longitudinal direction of the second air nozzle.

6. (Original) A method according to Claim 5, wherein a blowing rate of the first air nozzle is larger than a blowing rate of the second air nozzle.

7. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said blowing step and suction step are carried out simultaneously concurrently while the developer container is rotated.

8. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said blowing step and said suction sucking step are carried out simultaneously concurrently while reciprocating the developer container in a longitudinal direction thereof.

9. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said blowing step starts is carried out after starting said suction sucking step.

10. (Currently Amended) A recycling method for recycling a developer container, comprising:

a removing step of removing first and second used sealing members sealing first and second openings, respectively, provided in the developer container;

a blowing step of blowing air through the first opening into the developing container at a first flow rate;

a suction sucking step of sucking air through the first opening from the developer container at a second flow rate, which is larger than the first flow rate, to suck developer toner from the developer container to clean the developer container,

a filling step of filling the developer container with developer; and

a mounting step of mounting first and second new sealing members to seal the first and second openings

wherein while said blowing step and said suction sucking step are carried out concurrently carried out through a first opening, while supplying ambient air is flowing into the developer container through an ambient air inlet a second opening.

11. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 10, wherein the second opening is disposed at a position opposite from the first opening with respect to a longitudinal direction of the developer container.

12. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 10, further comprising an inserting step of inserting an air nozzle of the blowing device into the developer container through the first opening.

13. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 12, wherein in said blowing step air is blown through a plurality of air blowing ports in directions perpendicular to a longitudinal direction of the air nozzle at different positions with respect to a circumferential direction of the air nozzle.

14. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 12, wherein in said inserting step, first and second air nozzles are inserted into the developer container through the first opening, and in said blowing step air is blown through a plurality of air blowing ports of the first air nozzle in directions perpendicular to a longitudinal direction of the first air nozzle at different positions with respect to a circumferential direction of the first air nozzle, and air is blown through an air blowing port provided at a longitudinal end of the second air nozzle in a longitudinal direction of the second air nozzle.

15. (Original) A method according to Claim 14, wherein a blowing rate of the first air nozzle is larger than a blowing rate of the second air nozzle.

16. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 10, wherein said blowing step and suction sucking step are carried out simultaneously concurrently while the developer container is rotated.

17. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 10, wherein said blowing step and said suction sucking step are carried out simultaneously concurrently while reciprocating the developer container in a longitudinal direction thereof.

18. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 10, wherein said blowing step starts is carried out after starting said suction sucking step.

19. (New) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising a step of setting a blowing device to be used in said blowing step and a sucking device to be used in said sucking step, in the opening.

20. (New) A method according to Claim 10, further comprising a step of setting a blowing device to be used in said blowing step and a sucking device to be used in said sucking step, in the opening.